

Text: Luke 22.25  
St Stephen's

April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006  
Maundy Thursday

## A LIFE-Style of Serving

Our story gets it right. They sat at that table that night with **dirty feet**. And they would have sat with unwashed feet for a long time if Jesus had not taken the task on himself.

They had **other thoughts**:

*Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Luke 22:24 (NIV)*

Whenever **Jesus taught about the cross**, his **disciples argued about who was the greatest**. Whenever he talked about laying down his life, they were talking about asserting theirs. It just comes **naturally**.

*Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors."*

**Benefactors**: The **patronage system** of ancient Greece. Those who were higher up gave help to those below them, but it was **help with a catch**. There was a **payoff**. People owed their benefactors loyalty and praise and honor and thanks... People were **in perpetual debt** to their benefactors.

**We do the same thing**. "I will serve people, but only when there is a **payoff**." And I am looking for **position and prestige and control and influence**. This kind of thinking shapes who we hang out with, who we invite to our parties, who we are seen with, who we defer to, who we serve... and a thousand other almost unconscious considerations. I help people who can help me.

*But you are not to be like that.*

With one sweeping sentence, Jesus invites us to follow him in...

## **The LIFE-Style of Serving...**

*Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. Luke 22:25-26 (NIV)*

### **No more... Instead...**

Serving to be seen, for reward, or for applause...

Serve quietly, secretly...

*"Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing..." Matt 6.3*

Serving only the select, the elect, the advantageous...

*"Be... the servant of all..." Mk 9:35*

Serving only on the big team, working only for the blockbuster deal, or volunteering only for the great event...

Serving in the little moment, the last people and the least important tasks...

*"If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last..." Mk 9:35*

Loving people for my sake...

Love them for their own sake and for Christ's sake.

*"Lord Jesus, as it would please you, bring me someone today whom I can serve."*

R. Foster

**Say, "I am your servant"**

**Remember: The Cross and Serving go together.**

Why? **Only Jesus' cross has the power to create a serving heart.**

Pick up **Peter's story** again...

*"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat..."*

*But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."*

*Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."*

Lk 22:31-34 (NIV)

Before the night is over, Peter will come to **the end of himself**. The roots of his life, of his massive self confidence, of his unerving heart will be laid bare, and he be shattered. But that will not be the **end of Peter**, it will only be **the real beginning**. Because when **Peter bails out, Jesus will go on**. All the way to the cross. To pay the price for Peter, to open the door to a new life and a new heart.

*But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And **when you have turned** back, strengthen your brothers."*

Peter will do that. By coming to the cross... living under the cross, staying close to the cross... That is what we do again tonight...

*"do this in remembrance of me..."*